

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 125507 TOSEC 130136

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125507 TOSEC 130136

FOR SECRETARY AND SONNENFELDT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMGT, ASIG, GW

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM - POSSIBLE CLOSING OF
BREMEN CONSULATE

1. SUMMARY. DURING YOUR MAY 15 MEETING WITH SPD DEPUTY CHAIRMAN HANS KOSCHNICK YOU AGREED TO REEXAMINE THE POSSIBLE CLOSING OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BREMEN AND TO DELAY ANY FINAL DECISION UNTIL AT LEAST AFTER THE FRG ELECTIONS THIS FALL. (SINCE YOUR DECISION ALL BUREAUCRATIC PREPARATIONS FOR THE CLOSING OF BREMEN HAVE BEEN STOPPED.) ALTHOUGH KOSCHNICK APPEARED TO BE SATISFIED, WE UNDERSTAND THAT BREMEN MAY COME UP DURING YOUR TALKS IN BONN, AND WE ARE THEREFORE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

2. BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS. THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BREMEN WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1796 AND IS THE OLDEST AMERICAN CONSULATE IN EUROPE. NOW, AS AT THAT TIME, BREMEN IS
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PAGE 02 STATE 125507 TOSEC 130136

A MAJOR GERMAN PORT AND THE CONSULATE GENERAL THERE IS

CONSEQUENTLY A COMMERCIAL WORK ORIENTED POST. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL COMMERCIAL WORK CONNECTED WITH THE POST, THE CONSULATE GENERAL ALSO NOW PREPARES SPECIAL REPORTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ON

GERMAN IMPORTS OF TOBACCO AND COTTON. ON THE CONSULAR SIDE, THE CONSULATE GENERAL IS CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH TOURIST VISAS AND ISSUING PASSPORTS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES FOR THE DEPENDENTS OF U.S. TROOPS STATIONED NEARBY, MAINLY IN BREMERHAVEN. (NO IMMIGRANT VISAS ARE ISSUED.). POLITICALLY, THE CONSULATE GENERAL DOES LITTLE REPORTING BUT PLAYS AN IMPORTANT REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE. PRESENTLY, CONSULATE GENERAL

IS STAFFED BY FOUR AMERICANS AND SIXTEEN FSL'S; OPERATING EXPENSES RUN ABOUT \$400,000 A YEAR.

3. A TEAM FROM THE INSPECTOR GENERAL INSPECTED BREMEN IN 1975 AND RECOMMENDED THAT IT BE REDUCED TO EITHER A ONE-MAN -ONSULATE GENERAL OR A CONSULAR AGENCY. THE BASIS FOR THEIR RECOMMENDATION WAS THAT THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL AND CONSULAR WORK NOW PERFORMED BY BREMEN COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN HAMBURG AND THAT SUCH A TRANSFER WOULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL SAVINGS.

THEIR FINDINGS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS:

-- THE CONSULAR WORK OF THE BREMEN CONSULATE GENERAL COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO HAMBURG WITHOUT THE NEED TO EXPAND THE EXISTING HAMBURG CONSULAR SECTION. SUCH A TRANSFER WOULD CAUSE FEW PROBLEMS SINCE HAMBURG IS ONLY 65 MILES AWAY AND SINCE MOST OF BREMEN'S CONSULAR WORK IS CONDUCTED BY MAIL. THE RESULTING INCREASE IN THE HAMBURG CONSULAR WORKLOAD COULD ALSO EASILY BE HANDLED SINCE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL FOUND THE CONSULAR SECTION IN HAMBURG TO BE UNDER-EMPLOYED.

-- THE NORMAL COMMERCIAL WORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE PORT
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PAGE 03 STATE 125507 TOSEC 130136

WHICH IS NOW PERFORMED BY BREMEN COULD BE PERFORMED BY HAMBURG, IN THE SAME WAY AS HAMBURG PERFORMS SIMILAR FUNCTION FOR HANNOVER. THE TRANSFER OF THE NORMAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES FROM BREMEN WOULD REQUIRE, HOWEVER, THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL E/C OFFICER TO HAMBURG.

-- THE TRANSFER OF THE SPECIAL COTTON REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FROM BREMEN TO HAMBURG WOULD BE DIFFICULT

SINCE THIS REPORTING REQUIRES ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATION. WHILE UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED, THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S TEAM FELT ON BALANCE THAT PERIODIC TRIPS TO BREMEN FROM HAMBURG COULD SECURE ALL OF THE NECESSARY INFORMATION. (THE SPECIAL TOBACCO REPORTS NOW WRITTEN BY BREMEN COULD EASILY BE DONE IN HAMBURG SINCE THREE OF THE MAJOR GERMAN TOBACCO COMPANIES ARE NOW LOCATED THERE.)

-- THE QUESTION OF STATIONING AN AMERICAN BRIGADE NEAR BREMEN WAS NOT ADDRESSED BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S TEAM. HOWEVER, THE STATIONING OF THIS BRIGADE DOES NOT NOW APPEAR TO WARRANT THE CONTINUED OPERATION OF THE BREMEN CONSULATE GENERAL SINCE MOST OF THE CONSULAR PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN TROOPS STATIONED IN GERMANY ARE ALREADY HANDLED THROUGH THE MILITARY COURIER SYSTEM AND BY SPECIALLY EMPOWERED ENLISTED MEN STATIONED ON THE MILITARY POSTS

-- AS STATED ABOVE, THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN BREMEN IS A LARGE AND EXPENSIVE POST WITH A STAFF OF FOUR AMERICANS, SIXTEEN FSL'S AND ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES OF NEARLY \$400,000. THE COMPLETE CLOSURE OF BREMEN WOULD RELEASE THREE AMERICANS AND FOURTEEN FSL'S FOR ASSIGNMENT ELSEWHERE (THE REMAINING ONE AMERICAN AND TWO FSL'S WOULD HAVE TO BE ASSIGNED TO HAMBURG)

AND WOULD SAVE \$340,000 PER YEAR IN OPERATING EXPENSES.

4. THE FOLLOWING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ARGUE STRONGLY AGAINST REDUCING OR CLOSING BREMEN, PARTICULARLY THIS YEAR.

-- THE FRG IS OUR STRONGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT ALLY
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PAGE 04 STATE 125507 TOSEC 130136

ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE, AND IN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AS A WHOLE. IT IS NOT IN THE US NATIONAL INTEREST TO DISTURB FRG CONFIDENCE IN US AT A TIME WHEN ALL SIGNS POINT TO OUR SEEKING MORE RATHER THAN LESS FRG COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE.

-- CLOSING THE POST DURING THE FRG ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE FRG'S ALL-OUT CELEBRATION OF OUR BICENTENNIAL WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL IMPACT. KOSCHNICK HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT CLOSING BREMEN IN THIS ELECTION YEAR IS TANTAMOUNT TO A SLAP AT THE SPD. BREMEN IS THE ONE LAND WHERE THE SPD GOVERNS WITHOUT A COALITION PARTNER, AND IT IS HISTORICALLY AN SPD STRONGHOLD. YOUR DECISION TO RE-EXAMINE THE BREMEN CLOSING AND, ABOVE ALL, NOT TO HAVE ANYTHING SAID IN PUBLIC ABOUT IT

BEFORE THE OCTOBER FRG ELECTIONS RECOGNIZED THE
INOPPORTUNE TIMING OF THE PLANNED AUGUST 31 CLOSURE.

-- AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO CLOSE BREMEN COMING RIGHT AFTER
THE ELECTIONS WOULD ALSO HAVE A DAMAGING NEGATIVE IMPACT,
WHETHER AN SPD OR CDU CHANCELLOR IS THEN IN OFFICE.
HENCE IT SEEMS PREFERABLE, GIVEN THESE POLITICAL
PRESSURES, TO DEFER RE-EXAMINATION OF A POSSIBLE
CLOSING FOR THE PRESENT.

5. CLEARED: M/MO, NORLAND; S/IG, SAYRE; C, MILLINGTON;
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ROBINSON

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